

# **Fifteen Feet Up**

By: Alex Ray

I watched as a cool breeze made the trees sway back and forth. Fifteen feet up in the air I gripped the frail tree trunk praying that it would hold. As always, it did. Still hugging the young Douglas fir for my life, I glanced over at my best friend Nick. He nodded back at me, and our imaginations took place of reality.

The world suddenly changed right before my eyes. The trail below Nick and I became a salty ocean and mist. Trees and dirt formed into planks and full sized ships. Turning towards Nick, I saw that his Levis and white t-shirt had been transformed into attire fit for a pirate.

Perching in the crows nest, it was my job to scout out enemies and warn Captain Nick. Without warning, a cannon ball slammed into the ship. Captain Nick bellowed at the crewmates, “ALL RIGHT YOU SCALLY-WAGS! PREPARE TO RETURN FIRE!” After taking much damage, we shimmied down our masts and onto the deck below. Grabbing pinecones, rocks, and small pieces of kindling off the ground, we hurled everything at the enemy. Each projectile echoed off the tree trunks which made up the enemy’s ship. Out of ammunition, Captain Nick bellowed with all his remaining might and valor, “ABANDON SHIP!” Following his lead, I ran and jumped out of the dirt and into the ocean. Nick was already swimming away, making strokes with his arms and sprinting. Immediately, I followed the trail deeper into the forest.

Swimming off the trail, the sea of trees became dark. The canopy blocked out the sun. Unknown animals made noises all around us and a thick mist formed. I picked up a broken tree branch and turned around too quickly. I hit the muddy ground with a splat.

For a moment, I returned to reality. The trail was off on our right, still in sight, along with a few black birds in the trees. Silently I stood up, and I was thrust back into the rainforest.

Knowing our only chance of survival was to make a haven; we armed ourselves with branches, and began looking for supplies. Finding a valuable item, I called Nick over in my best Crocodile Hunter accent to help me move the flat piece of wood. He climbed a few feet up the biggest tree and set the wood on the branches. An anaconda hissed close by, and I clambered up the tree swinging my tree branch to defend myself. Finally safe, we slept, only to awake in the woods.

Nick and I returned to the same trail, the same pinecones, and the same wood haven up in the same tree in the same forest countless times. Yet, we didn't return to the pirate ship or the rain forest. Rather, we fought in a great military battle, and endured the heat of the Sahara Desert. Because the forest doesn't just supply us basic materials and oxygen; it provides everyone a kingdom where our dreams can reign.